

Will it or won't it?
Western Snowpack
Drought Conditions Improving
Spring Things

As to the will it or won't it question...

It won't rain all weekend, other than the Eureka area. The valley will stay spring like and beautiful, with great driving and skiing conditions for the Sierra. There are 3 frontal systems efforting their way to the coast; some are not yet discernable on satellite. But their efforts will not amount to much in the way of ridge busting. The previously forecasted storm of interest was set for Monday. But now it looks more meager, with the only excited model, the GFS, now tracking the system further to north, in alignment with other guidance. It has a juicy tap, but the precipitable water band is fairly thin. It has a good jet into Monday night, though. So a few showers are likely. These would be rain showers even in the higher terrain, with a snow level as high as 9,000' initially, dropping to 6,000' by Tuesday morning. Sacramento probably won't see more than a few drops of rain overnight Monday. Beyond the first half of Tuesday, the ridge just powers up again. This is a big swing from what was shown a few days ago. So, we're off storm watch for now. Oh, the Feather/ Shasta areas are forecast to get only about a quarter inch of precip on Monday.

Sacramento's precip stands at 96% percent of normal for this time of year; 14.60" vs. the normal of 15.25" for this date. February was cooler than normal for the Capitol City, with the mean downtown temperature 2.0 degrees cooler than average. That was driven by cooler overnight lows, primarily.

>From the State Climatologist, the January monthly climate summary is now complete. Please go to:

http://www.climate.water.ca.gov/climate_data/

Snowpack latest. The western U.S. has had a very good snow season this year. Colorado, Arizona and northern New Mexico are seeing surprisingly high values for a La Nina year.

The National Water and Climate Center in Portland, OR creates and transmits the weekly Western US Basin snowpack and cumulative precipitation report every Monday. For detailed information on specific basins across the west, please go to their website:

<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/data/snow/update/ws.txt>

Or for a nice graphical color depiction of the Snotel data by the Western Region Climate Center that shows virtually all SNOTEL sites at or above normal for this time of year, go to:

<http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/snotelanom/basinswe.html>

Our own snowpack stands thus:

Northern	117%
Central	103%
Southern	122%

Statewide Avg. 112% (101% of April 1 average)

For great footage of the last survey, please see the DWR public affairs page. Our video guys do great work:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/news/>

Click on Snow survey video.

February's Bulletin 120 is completed and on-line. The statewide conditions graphic on page 16 is most instructive. It depicts all 4 critical variables; snowpack, precipitation, runoff, and reservoir storage for the past 12 years:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/bulletin120/>

Bulletin 120 is a publication issued four times a year, in the second week of February, March, April, and May by the California Department of Water Resources. It contains forecasts of the volume of seasonal runoff from the state's major watersheds, and other summaries.

And of course, for all water supply and hydrologic information, you'll want to go to the California Data Exchange Center website:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/>

The American Association of State Climatologists provides information and links to all states within their organization. Readers of this newsletter would find information of interest:

<http://www.stateclimate.org>

Thanks to Jan Curtis with the Natural Resources Conservation Service for that link, as well as this one on drought:

<http://www.drought.gov>

California has been improving as far as drought conditions. The areal extent of dry, moderate and severe conditions has been shrinking over the past several weeks, and currently no sections of California are labeled extreme or exceptional!

The U.S. Drought Portal was officially launched on November 1, 2007. It was created to provide comprehensive information on emerging and ongoing droughts, and to enhance the nation's drought preparedness. The Drought Portal is part of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).

Spring signals. Daylight saving time begins this weekend. Yes, you lose an hour of sleep. Set the clocks forward one hour overnight Saturday into Sunday morning. The official time change is 2:00am. Statistically, there are more accidents on a Monday morning following this time change than any other day; blamed on driver's sleep reduction. Be careful!

The Vernal Equinox occurs locally at 10:48pm Wednesday night, the 19th of March.

DWR hydrologists and NWS personnel will be helping judge this year's Sacramento Regional Science and Engineering Fair. The event will be held on Saturday, March 29 at Rosemont High School. For participation, volunteer and sponsorship information, go to:

<http://www.srsefair.org/>

Be back next week-

(EL)

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